

**L2013.64**  
**Michael Portantino**  
**Collection, 1977-2010**

**FINDING AID AUTHOR**

Gabrielle Garcia

**ACQUISITION INFORMATION**

William Mondigo donated these materials on behalf of Michael Portantino to Lambda Archives of San Diego in 2013. Accession #L2013.64.

**PROCESSING INFORMATION**

This collection was processed by Gabrielle Garcia as part of the 2020 CSL Project.

**EXTENT**

Number of containers: 1  
Linear feet of shelf space: 1

**ABSTRACT**

**BIOGRAPHY OR HISTORY**

Content Warning: This note contains mentions of suicide.

Michael Portantino was the publisher of newspapers under the Uptown Publications umbrella, including San Diego's Gay & Lesbian Times. Portantino was born on November 11, 1958, in Long Branch, NJ, where he grew up. He also lived in San Francisco before moving to San Diego.

“When he arrived in San Diego in the 1980s, the local gay press was mostly oriented toward entertainment and social activities. Mr. Portantino, who had been a successful stockbroker, bought one of San Diego's smallest gay publications in 1989 with the goal of turning it into a newspaper with coverage of news, politics and community issues. The paper grew to become one of the largest gay publications in Southern California with a circulation of more than 15,000. He was dedicated to the weekly paper and was devastated when he had to shut down the publication in October [2010] due to economic difficulties, friends said.”

<https://www.sandiegouniontribune.com/sdut-michael-portantino-publisher-gay-and-lesbian-times-2010dec09-story.html>

Over the years Portantino had donated millions in free advertising space for local social service and AIDS organizations and a volunteer at Mama's Kitchen. In December 2010, Portantino committed suicide by jumping off the rooftop of the Park Manor Suites Hotel on Sixth Avenue bordering Balboa Park. With the financial difficulties his paper faced amounting to thousands in unpaid taxes and considerable debt, Portantino was soon to be facing charges surrounding allegations of inflating circulation numbers to advertisers. Some believed this contributed to deteriorating mental health. <https://www.nlgja.org/blog/2010/05/coverage-of-san-diego-gay-papers-financial-troubles-raises-questions/>  
<https://www.sandiegoreader.com/weblogs/financial-crime-politics/2010/dec/10/portantinos-criminal-lawyer-talks-of-da-investigat/>  
<https://www.sandiegoreader.com/weblogs/financial-crime-politics/2010/dec/09/ex-gay-publisher-portantino-takes-own-life/>

He is survived by his daughter, Tatiana; two brothers, Phil of New Jersey and Anthony, a state assemblyman from La Cañada Flintridge; and a sister, Mary Ann Portantino Doran of Georgia.

## **COLLECTION SCOPE AND CONTENT**

This collection contains materials pertaining to the professional career of Michael Portantino and Uptown Publications, gay and lesbian newspapers/journalism, and the 2000 National March on Washington. The materials include bios, articles, photos, corporate records, by laws, minutes, contracts, handbooks, policies, mailers, forms, financials, press releases, media kits, portfolios, surveys, speeches, correspondence, directories, contact lists, ephemera, memorabilia, certificates, and reports.

## **ARRANGEMENT**

This collection consists of 1 box divided into 3 series:

- Series I: Uptown Publications
- Series II: Media and Newspapers
- Series III: Miscellany

## **SEPARATED MATERIAL**

In this field, list any materials that have been removed from the collection and transferred to another collection, department (e.g., the library), or institution.

1. T-shirts
  - a. 1 Poncho: Team San Diego 1998 Games V
  - b. 2 T-shirts: AIDS Walk San Diego 2006
  - c. 1 T-shirt: Gay & Lesbian Times
2. Buttons
  - a. 2 pins and 12 buttons
3. Photos [P364]
  - a. 1 pack of photos and loose photos

## **SUBJECTS**

Michael Portantino, Uptown Publications, Gay & Lesbian Times, National Gay Newspaper Guild, National March on Washington 2000, newspapers, homophobia, suicide

## **CONDITIONS GOVERNING ACCESS**

This collection is open and available for research use. Copyright restrictions may apply.

## **PREFERRED CITATION**

The suggested citation for the collection is:

[Item Description]  
Michael Portantino Collection, 1977-2010  
Lambda Archives of San Diego  
San Diego, California

## **RELATED MATERIAL**

L2010.32

## **LOCATION NOTE**

C.6.2.3

## **LANGUAGES**

English

## **CONTAINER LIST**

<b>Box</b>	<b>Folde r</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Date(s)</b>	
1	1	Michael Portantino Materials		
1	2	Uptown Publications Corporate Records 1984-1991	1984-1991	
1	3	Uptown publications Staff Handbook 2002	2002	
1	4	Uptown Publications Editorial Policies and Procedures		
1	5	Other Uptown Publications Materials		
1	6	Media Kits, Portfolios, Ad Rates		

1	7	Media Kits, Portfolios, Ad Rates		
1	8	National Gay Newspaper Guild Survey 2005	2005	
1	9	March on Washington 2000 (Millenium March)	2000	
1	10	Correspondence 1977-2010 [contains homophobia]	1997-2010	
1	11	Pride Materials 1986-1999	1986-1999	
1	12	Directories and Contact Lists		
1	13	Ephemera 1993-2000	1993-2000	
1	14	Ephemera		
1	15	Memorabilia		
1	16	Memorabilia		
1	17	Certificates 2001, 2010	2001, 2010	
1	18	Attacks on the Freedom to Learn 1996 Report	1996	
1	19	Miscellany 1988-2005	1988-2005	
1	Loose	Living Out Loud at the Embery Institute for Wildlife Conservation 2005 commemorative wooden box; Friend of the Live & Let Live Club 2006 glass award	2006	